

Strawberry Picking Begins

Days suitable for field work, the week ending Sunday, May 7, 2006, were 6.8. Topsoil moisture was rated 35% very short, 30% short and 35% adequate. Temperatures were variable for the week across the state, with mid-week temperatures of ten degrees above normal in some localities. There were no measurable amounts of precipitation in most localities for the week. Agricultural producers continued field preparation for spring crops. Other activities included planting, irrigating, greenhouse work, transplanting vegetable crops, topdressing fertilizer, and chemical thinning on fruit. Asparagus harvest continued across the state. Harvest of lettuce started in the north. Early tomatoes and sweet corn are under plastic. Harvest of greenhouse tomatoes began. Harvest of overwintered spinach was nearing completion in some fields in the central district. Early peas were in flower in the south. Potatoes were well past green row in the south. Arugula, green onion, leeks, and Swiss chard were harvested in the south. Condition of grain and hay crops was rated mostly fair. In the north, peaches were past full bloom and sizing well, and in some localities were in shuck stage. Apples were in various stages of bloom in the north. Peaches were sizing well in the south, and blueberries were beginning to form. Cranberries had been drained and were doing well. Strawberry picking began in some southern fields. Pasture was rated in mostly poor to fair condition.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR MAY 8, 2006

Arugula & Kale – Good quality products are being harvested in fair to good volume.

Asparagus – Very good quality product is available in normal quantity. The harvest should continue to increase over the next several weeks.

Beets – A fair volume of good quality product is available.

Cilantro – Over-wintered product is available though good quality spring planted is now harvesting.

Collards – Just began harvesting light quantities of good quality product.

Dill – A fair volume of good quality product is now available.

Escarole & Endive – Just started harvesting a light quantity of good quality product.

Leeks – A light volume of over-wintered product is available now and for some time. Transplanted product should be available by mid to third week of June. Spring planted due in July.

Lettuce – All good quality. Harvesting good quantities of Boston, fair quantities of Red and Green Leaf, and light quantities of Romaine. Look for Iceberg at the end of the month or beginning of June.

Parsley – Over-wintered product available though good quality spring planted is now available.

Radishes – Harvesting good quantities of good quality product.

Spinach – Over-wintered product is finishing up just as spring planted is beginning to be harvested.

Strawberries – Early harvests of great quality berries have just begun, though the bulk of the crop will be harvested towards the end of the month, with lower volumes to continue through the first week of June. Our Chandler variety berries are picked when ripe and have more red interior color than white. They're grown in raised beds, under black plastic, with a large berry size and excellent taste.

Swiss Chard – A small volume of great quality over-wintered product is still available just as spring planted product starts to become available in very light quantities.

JERSEY FRESH FORECAST

Blueberries – Minor quantities of early varieties like Weymouth starting around mid-June. Much more widely planted Duke variety starting 3-4 days later with volume available a week after that.

Cabbage – Should start harvesting near the end of the month.

Cucumbers – Harvesting tunnel grown by early June. Field grown will be available by mid-June.

Squash – Should begin harvesting minor quantities of Yellow and Zucchini grown in tunnels by the end of the month. Field grown by about the third week of June.

Turnips – Should begin harvesting in 2-3 weeks.